
2.0 REGIONAL WATERFRONT TRAIL SYSTEM

In contrast to the shorter trail loops between county parks and population centers described in Volume 3, the Regional Waterfront Trail System (RWTS) totals over 88 miles of pathways along Erie County's waterfronts. The RWTS in aggregate will create a facility that is clearly a regional asset connecting various points of county-wide significance. The purpose of this section is to provide the framework to facilitate the planning, funding, design and construction of a completed facility. Please refer to the RWTS Map Figure 5.2 for orientation relevant to this text.

The Erie County Regional Waterfront Trail system will be a continuous network of pathways connecting parks, waterfront areas, businesses and neighborhoods. The completed facility will provide for safe, identifiable and maintainable means of alternative transportation while providing recreational opportunities and improved access to the County's extensive waterfront. The Erie County Trail network is both a backbone for waterfront connectivity and the embodiment of a principle. The principle is the belief that open space and waterfront areas are public assets and that generous, green, easily accessible space at the water's edge is a necessary part of any waterfront development. This study reinforces the vision that someday the recreational trails will pass through all waterfront activity centers throughout the County. What has been successfully accomplished with the built Riverwalk along the County's northern waterfront must continue along the southern waterfront to complete the vision. A completed facility will provide pedestrians, bicyclists, joggers, skaters, strollers, skiers and others with an opportunity for improved quality of life, which will make for a better Erie County. To that end, this system is being coordinated with the Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) and its member agencies.

A completed Trail system would also advance the vision of making this network a state owned and operated facility. Being one of New York State's great waterfronts, worthy of a first-class amenity, the RWTS would allow for the completion of a continuous Trail System

from Fort Niagara on Lake Ontario to Evangola State Park in southern Erie County.

The impacts of a completed waterfront trail facility will be far reaching and justify the capital expense necessary for implementation of the RWTS. When completed, the facility will provide the following specific benefits to the residents of the County as well as the tourists who visit the area:

1. *Increased public access to the waterfront.*
2. *Unprecedented linkage of local attractions, most of which are currently seen as disconnected and isolated from each other and from adjacent land-uses.*
3. *Increased economic development by increasing traffic, and therefore the commercial potential of the waterfront. The RWTS is a low-tech, relatively inexpensive way to expand the use and profitability of the County and its waterfront.*
4. *Reduced traffic congestion by allowing and encouraging safe bicycle and pedestrian travel between neighborhoods, the waterfront and various attractions.*
5. *Increased recreational opportunities and green space for the region's residents, for whom the RWTS will be a symbol of their inclusion in waterfront life.*
6. *Increased integration of the County's recreational opportunities including the City's magnificent Olmsted Parks which will be linked to the waterfront and to each other through the greenway network.*
7. *Increased educational opportunities through elements such as the Industrial Heritage Trail on the Buffalo River, historic markers along the RWTS, linkage to the proposed Cobblestone Historic District in downtown Buffalo and through the impact of simply bringing the public to areas with such a rich and varied history.*
8. *Enhanced quality of life and health to the Great Lakes human and wildlife communities as waterfront access leads to public concern for the areas significant natural resources.*

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9. *The RWTS could also function in many places as a buffer, protecting the County's waterways from structures that might otherwise be placed right at the water's edge.*

2.1 DESCRIPTION AND STATUS:

The entire Trail System will be comprised of a network of individual trail segments that are at various stages of development ranging from early conceptual planning to built and in-use. The following text will serve to describe each segment and its current status. The format places emphasis on the primary waterfront alignment beginning at the Erie Canal to the north and moving south along the Niagara River, the Inner Harbor and then Lake Erie. Each segment of this facility's "backbone" is identified with numbers 1 - 16. Letters are used to identify the significant connecting linkages from adjacent communities to the primary trail, again, beginning in the north and moving south. These linkages include:

- A. *The Ellicott Creek Trail in the Town of Amherst*
- B. *Two-Mile Creek Trail in the Town of Tonawanda*
- C. *The Sherwood Greenway in the Town of Tonawanda*
- D. *The Beaver Island Bike Path in the Town of Grand Island*
- E. *The West River Trail in the Town of Grand Island*
- F. *The Scajaquada Pathway in the City of Buffalo*
- G. *The Industrial Heritage Trail in the City of Buffalo*
- H. *The Buffalo River Greenway in the City of Buffalo*
- I. *The Lake Road Trail in the Town of Evans*

2.2 PRIMARY WATERFRONT RECREATION TRAIL SEGMENTS

Again, we refer to exhibit Figure 5.2 for a coordinated orientation with the following text.

I. **AMHERST CANALWAY TRAIL:** CONSTRUCTED / IN USE

This segment, approximately 5.7 miles in length, is situated along the south edge of Tonawanda Creek and the Erie Canal in the Town of Amherst. Built in two phases, one in 1980 and the other in 1984, the trail begins at the Amherst Museum at New Road and currently ends at Sweet Home Road. It consists of both off-road and limited on-road segments. The Town of Amherst maintains the trail. Please note the NY State Canal Corporation will be constructing an off-road trail from the Amherst Museum northward along the Erie Canal all the way to the City of Lockport and beyond.

The key linkages of this segment include:

- THE FUTURE CANAL TRAIL TO LOCKPORT
- AMHERST VETERANS CANAL PARK
- AMHERST NATURE VIEW PARK

2. **ERIE CANALWAY TRAIL (PHASE 3):** PROPOSED / NOT FUNDED

Approximately 2.0 miles long, this segment is situated along the south side of Tonawanda Creek between Sweet Home Road and Niagara Falls Boulevard. Designed in concept only, this is the last remaining segment of the north end of the RWTS. It is anticipated that the Town of Amherst will maintain the trail once completed.

The key potential linkage of this segment includes:

- ROUTE 62, NIAGARA FALLS BOULEVARD

3. ERIE CANALWAY TRAIL (PHASE 2): PROPOSED AND FUNDED

This segment situated between Niagara Falls Boulevard and the City of Tonawanda/Town boundary line. Approximately 2.0 miles long, the project will go out for construction bids by the Fall of 2003. Once constructed, it will consist of approximately 1 mile off-road trail and 1 mile on-road.. It is anticipated that the Town of Amherst will maintain the east end of the trail and Erie County will maintain the west end.

The key potential linkage of this segment include:

- ROUTE 62, NIAGARA FALLS BOULEVARD
- ELLICOTT CREEK COUNTY PARK
- ELLICOTT CREEK TRAILWAY

4. ERIE CANALWAY TRAIL (PHASE 1): CONSTRUCTED / IN USE

This 2.2 mile segment, meanders along the south bank of the Erie Canal/Tonawanda Creek between the City/Town of Tonawanda border and the Niagara River. At the confluence with the river, it connects with NYS Bike Route 5 (into Niagara County) and continues south along the Niagara River. This segment is situated in the City of Tonawanda and consists primarily of off-road segments. Noteworthy of this segment is the fact that it passes through the heart of an active commercial area jointly shared by the Cities of Tonawanda and North Tonawanda. The majority of it has been operational since 2001. Maintenance of this segment is still under review..

The key linkages of this segment include:

- THE CITY OF TONAWANDA CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
- GATEWAY HARBOR PARK
- NYS BIKE ROUTE 5
- THE RIVERWALK

5. THE RIVERWALK: CONSTRUCTED / IN USE

Probably the most heavily used segment of the entire network, the Riverwalk is approximately 13 miles in length and traverses the east shore of the Niagara River from the Erie Canal/Tonawanda Creek south to downtown Buffalo. This popular segment consists of a generous 13 foot wide pavement that is off-road the entire length with one exception along Niagara Street. This exception travels “on-road” or “on sidewalk” along the Ferry Street/Hampshire Avenue section of Niagara Street. This condition is less than ideal compared to the balance of the Riverwalk, however, site constraints including the Black Rock Channel and the I-190 make this area very difficult and cost prohibitive to develop an “off-road” trailway. To date, there are no proposed improvements for this stretch of the Riverwalk.

The most heavily used area of this segment is in the linear waterfront parks of Niawanda and Isle View in the City and Town of Tonawanda respectively. The use was so heavy in this area that certain segments had to be widened in recent years to accommodate the crowds. A 3 mile section just south of the South Grand Island Bridge detours away from the waters edge and runs off-road but parallel to River Road through the industrial area of the Town of Tonawanda. The northern most portion of the Buffalo section was constructed in 2000 and the balance of the Buffalo Riverwalk has been recently renovated. However, more work remains to bring certain areas of the older section up to acceptable design standards. The Erie County Parks Department maintains the Riverwalk.

The key linkages of this segment include:

- NIAWANDA PARK
- TWO MILE CREEK TRAIL
- VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK
- ISLE VIEW COUNTY PARK
- THE GRAND ISLAND BIKE PATH

- THE FUTURE CHERRY FARM PARK
- THE FUTURE SHERWOOD GREENWAY
- OLMSTED'S HISTORIC RIVERSIDE PARK
- ERIE COUNTY'S ONTARIO STREET BOAT LAUNCH
- ERIE COUNTY'S TOWPATH PARK
- THE SCAJAQUADA PATHWAY
- SQUAW ISLAND PARK
- BRODERICK PARK / BIRD ISLAND PIER
- THE PEACE BRIDGE AND CANADA'S TRAILWAY NETWORK
- OLMSTED'S HISTORIC FRONT PARK AND PARKWAY SYSTEM
- LASALLE PARK
- ERIE BASIN MARINA
- BUFFALO'S INNER HARBOR, NAVAL PARK AND GREENWAY PLAZA
- DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL AREAS
- THE PROPOSED INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE TRAIL AND BUFFALO RIVER GREENWAY

6. **THE OUTER HARBOR / ROUTE 5 TRAILWAY:** PROPOSED AND FUNDED

This segment begins in downtown Buffalo where the Riverwalk ends at the foot of Main Street and the Buffalo River. The proposed length is approximately 3.2 miles and runs south to Gallagher Beach. In absence of an on-grade Route 5 bridge, the northern portion of this segment is the most challenging as the trail proposed runs “off-road” between the north edge of the River and industrial structures, with portions “on-road” across the Ohio Street bridge connecting back with Route 5/Furhman Boulevard along the lakeshore. At the intersection of Ohio Street and Furhman Boulevard, a future spur could split north up to the outer harbor area as the main trailway turns south to connect with the existing asphalt path at the south end of the Small

Boat Harbor. Maintenance of this segment is to be determined.

The key linkages of this segment include:

- BUFFALO'S INNER HARBOR, NAVAL PARK AND GREENWAY PLAZA
- DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL AREAS
- THE PROPOSED INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE TRAIL AND BUFFALO RIVER GREENWAY
- THE FUTURE IMPROVED TIMES BEACH AREA
- THE OUTER HARBOR AREA (FESTIVAL GROUNDS, BUFFALO YACHT CLUB, ETC.)
- THE SMALL BOAT HARBOR
- TIFT FARM NATURE PRESERVE
- GALLAGHER BEACH

7. SMALL BOAT HARBOR/GALLAGHER BEACH: CONSTRUCTED / IN USE

This 0.8 mile segment runs along the west side of Furhman Boulevard around the south parking area for the Small Boat Harbor (0.5 miles) and directly adjacent to the Gallagher Beach area (0.3 miles). The 0.5 mile section is asphalt pavement and was constructed in 1996. The 0.3 mile section is made of some asphalt but is primarily made of wood along a formal boardwalk that defines the beach area. The Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority owns and maintains this segment.

The key linkages of this segment include:

- SMALL BOAT HARBOR
- GALLAGHER BEACH

8. TIFT STREET CONNECTION: PLANNED AND FUNDED

The City of Buffalo recently won a Congestion, Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) grant for the design and construction of this 0.5 mile 10' wide off-road segment along the west edge of Furhman Boulevard from Gallagher Beach south to the existing pedestrian

bridge over the Union Ship Canal. Construction is expected to begin in the Spring of 2004. The City of Buffalo will own and maintain this segment.

The key linkages of this segment include:

- GALLAGHER BEACH
- TIFFT NATURE PRESERVE
- THE FUTURE UNION SHIP CANAL DEVELOPMENT
- THE TIFFT STREET PLAY FIELDS 0.4 MILES TO THE EAST

9. UNION SHIP CANAL TO MILESTRIP ROAD: PROPOSED/ NOT FUNDED

Included in this segment is the short section from the Union Ship Canal to Ridge Road which is currently defined as an on-road trail (running along the old abandoned portion of Furhman Boulevard). It needs to be planned and constructed properly as a truly off-road multi-use trail and should be included with the following defined section.

The State DOT is currently studying Route 5 between Ridge Road and Milestrip as part of the Southtowns Connector Study. The EIS for this study is scheduled for completion in the summer of 2003. Included in the design options is a proposed 2.8 mile off-road trail along the west edge of Route 5. It would connect to the existing off-road trail at Woodlawn Beach. There is no current funding available, however, once the planning is done and approved, the trail could be separated from the road project and funded and built prior to any future road improvements. Maintenance of this segment is to be determined.

The key linkages along this segment include:

- THE FUTURE UNION SHIP CANAL DEVELOPMENT
- THE FUTURE BETHLEHEM STEEL DEVELOPMENT
- WOODLAWN BEACH STATE PARK

10. WOODLAWN BEACH: CONSTRUCTED / IN USE

This 0.5 mile existing asphalt multi-use trail was in approximately 2000, as part of the Milestrip/Route 5 interchange improvements. It meanders along the west side of Route 5 directly adjacent to Woodlawn Beach State Park. Ownership and maintenance of this segment is still under review.

The key linkages of this segment include:

- WOODLAWN BEACH STATE PARK

11. HOOVER ROAD AREA: PROPOSED AND FUNDED

This approximately one mile segment, which runs from the Woodlawn trail at the north end of Hoover Road and Route 5 south to Old Big Tree Road and Route 5, has recently been funded. The Town of Hamburg was awarded an NYS Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) grant to design and build this combined off-road (approximately 2/3 of a mile) and on-road (approximately 1/3 of a mile) trail segment. Construction is anticipated to begin during the summer of 2004. The Town of Hamburg will be responsible to maintain this segment.

The key linkages of this segment include:

- WOODLAWN BEACH AREA
- HOOVER BEACH RESIDENTIAL/RESTAURANT AREA

12. OLD BIG TREE ROAD TO OLD LAKE SHORE ROAD: PROPOSED AND FUNDED

This 4.5 mile segment is currently being studied by the NYSDOT for reconstruction of Route 5 between Old Big Tree Road to the north and Old Lake Shore Road to the south. The study is further analyzing three design options, all of which include an on-road bicycle accommodation, either a 14' wide shared lane or a 5' wide dedicated bike lane. An off-road trail is not possible in this segment due to the proposed travel lane designs in relation to the width of the right-of-

way and the desires of the waterfront residents along the segment. Sidewalks, however, are proposed on both sides of the road. The project is funded for construction sometime in 2007 or 2008. It is anticipated that future maintenance of this segment will be performed by the State.

The key linkages of this segment include:

- HAMBURG TOWN PARK AND BEACH

13. OLD LAKE SHORE ROAD IN HAMBURG: NEITHER PROPOSED OR FUNDED

This approximately 3.1 mile segment is one of two segments along the Regional Waterfront Trail System that is not proposed. This segment is defined by Old Shore Road at Route 5 on the north end, along Old Lake Shore Road south to Eighteen Mile Creek, all within the Town of Hamburg. There have been preliminary discussions by the Town to plan closing this gap but to date there have been no immediate steps taken (such as grant applications). This will be the Town's next priority after segment #10, defined previously, is underway.

14. TOWN OF EVANS MULTI-USE PATH: PROPOSED / NOT FUNDED (EXCEPT FOR SEGMENT #15 BELOW)

The Town of Evans used grant money to study the development of a multi-use trail along Old Lake Shore Road from the north town line at Eighteen Mile Creek south to Evangola State Park. This 13.7 mile segment is planned to be mostly off-road, crossing at various points to either side, with a few minor sections on-road where space is limited. Only one segment, #15 defined below, is funded; however, the Town of Evans is aggressively pursuing funding sources to complete the entire length. Determination of who will eventually maintain the trail once completed has yet to be made.

Key linkages of this segment include:

- STURGEON POINT MARINA
- WENDT BEACH COUNTY PARK

- BENNETT BEACH COUNTY PARK
- EVANS TOWN PARK AND BEACH
- CAMP PIONEER
- LAKE ERIE BEACH PARK

15. TOWN OF EVANS MULTI-USE PATH: PROPOSED AND FUNDED (BETWEEN WENDT BEACH COUNTY PARK AND EVANS TOWN PARK)

The Town of Evans recently received a Federal Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21) grant for the design and construction of an approximately 2.8 mile trail along Old Lake Shore Road between Wendt Beach and Town Park. The trail will be off-road and meanders along either side of the road, depending on the right-of-way and field conditions. Design will be completed in 2003 and construction is expected to begin in the spring of 2004. Once completed, determination of who maintains the trail will need to be made.

Key linkages of this segment include:

- WENDT BEACH COUNTY PARK
- BENNETT BEACH COUNTY PARK
- EVANS TOWN PARK
- FUTURE LINKAGE TO THE VILLAGE OF ANGOLA

16. EVANGOLA STATE PARK: CONSTRUCTED / IN USE

There is an existing 1.2 mile, 8' wide off-road multi-use asphalt trail in this segment of the Regional Waterfront Trail System. New York State owns and maintains this trail as it runs along Old Lake Shore Road through Evangola State Park. There are other trails in Evangola State Park that connect this trail to the beach.

17. EVANGOLA PARK TO THE CATTARAUGUS INDIAN RESERVATION: **NEITHER PROPOSED OR FUNDED**

This 1.1 mile segment along Old Lake Shore Road between Evangola State Park and the Cattaraugus Indian Reservation, is the final gap in the entire Waterfront Regional Trail System. To date, there is no proposal to complete the link, however, there appears to be ample space to continue the off-road pathway from Evangola State Park along the west side of Old Lake Shore Road.

The following segments represented by letters and beginning in the north and moving south, identify the significant connecting linkage from the adjacent communities to the primary waterfront trail.

A. ELLICOTT CREEK TRAILWAY: **CONSTRUCTED / IN USE**

Constructed mainly within the Town of Amherst, this very popular off-road multi-use trail link is approximately 5 miles long and runs from the Maple Road/North Forest trailhead, northwest along the meandering Ellicott Creek to Niagara Falls Boulevard across from Ellicott Creek Park. The Town of Amherst maintains this segment. An extension of this trail through Ellicott Creek Park in Tonawanda was completed in 2001. It terminates at the Erie Canal.

The key linkages of this segment include:

- AMHERST MEMORIAL HILL GROVE
- TOWN OF AMHERST MUNICIPAL GOLF COURSE
- AMHERST PEPSI CENTER
- UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO, NORTH CAMPUS
- ROUTE 62, NIAGARA FALLS BOULEVARD
- ELLICOTT CREEK COUNTY PARK
- ERIE CANALWAY TRAIL

B. TWO MILE CREEK GREENWAY: CONSTRUCTED / IN USE

This trail linkage, approximately 2 miles in length, is situated along Two Mile Creek through the Town and City of Tonawanda. The south end, approximately 0.5 miles is on-road, adjacent to the Town golf course, with the balance of the trail off-road, meandering along either side of the Creek northward to the Niagara River and the Riverwalk. This greenway is maintained by the Erie County Parks Department.

The key linkages of this segment include:

- SHERIDAN PARK/GOLF COURSE
- THE FUTURE SHERWOOD GREENWAY
- VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK
- ISLE VIEW COUNTY PARK AND RIVERWALK
- NIAWANDA PARK

C. SHERWOOD GREENWAY: PLANNED AND FUNDED

This trailway linkage is planned as an approximately 1.8 mile off-road multi-use recreational pathway that extends the Two Mile Creek Greenway to the Riverwalk at Sheridan Drive. This segment is entirely in the Town of Tonawanda aligned through private property (Praxair, Inc.) for the first 1/5 and within the south right-of-ways of Woodward Avenue West and Sheridan Drive the remaining 4/5th's. New York State recently announced a \$2.1 million dollar grant for design and construction of this pathway, expected to be completed by 2005. Once completed it will be owned and maintained by the Town of Tonawanda.

The key linkages of this segment include:

- SHERIDAN PARK/GOLF COURSE
- TWO MILE CREEK GREENWAY
- THE RIVERWALK

D. BEAVER ISLAND BIKE PATH: CONSTRUCTED / IN USE

This off-road segment runs from the South Grand Island Bridge along South Parkway to Beaver Island State Park. The bike path is approximately 3.5 miles in length. It runs through a residential area of the island providing easy access to Beaver Island State Park. The path connects Grand Island and its parks to the Niagara Riverwalk in the Town of Tonawanda.

The key linkages of this segment include:

- THE RIVERWALK
- I-190
- BEAVER ISLAND STATE PARK

E. WEST RIVER TRAIL: PROPOSED / NOT FUNDED

This segment runs approximately 9 miles along the Niagara River from the existing trail at Beaver Island State Park to Buckhorn Island State Park. The proposed trail is off road between West River Parkway and the River. However, a couple of ideas are being considered, including closing one lane of the Parkway to traffic, but keeping it green for pedestrians.

Reference to Grand Island Boulevard should also be made. The GBNRTC is proposing more of a direct bicycle route through Grand Island along the Boulevard. Currently, the concept is proposed, but not funded.

The key linkages of this segment include:

- BEAVER ISLAND STATE PARK
- NIKE BASE PARK
- BUCKHORN ISLAND STATE PARK

F. SCAJAQUADA PATHWAY (PHASES I AND II): CONSTRUCTED / IN USE

This 2.1 mile trail linkage connects Delaware Park with Niagara Street just short of the existing Riverwalk. The 10' wide asphalt off-road pathway meanders along the north bank of the Scajaquada Creek intersected by two at grade crossings on Grant and Niagara Streets. The initial phase was built in 1992 and the second phase was built in 1999. The City of Buffalo Department of Public Works, Parks and Streets maintains this linkage.

I. SCAJAQUADA PATHWAY (PHASE III): PROPOSED AND FUNDED

This final phase of the Scajaquada Pathway will complete the missing section for a continuous link to the Niagara Riverwalk. The pathway alignment begins west of Niagara Street, crosses Scajaquada Creek and runs north along the east side of the I-190 and into the US Army Corps parking area where it meets the Riverwalk. The pathway is presently in final design and construction is expected to begin in the summer of 2003. The City will also maintain this final segment.

The key linkages of this segment include:

- DELAWARE PARK AND THE SURROUNDING CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS
- BUFFALO STATE COLLEGE
- GRANT/AMHERST COMMUNITY
- RIVERWALK

G. INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE TRAIL: PROPOSED / NOT FUNDED

This trail linkage is unique in that it is a proposed tour route for pedestrian, bicyclist and motorists along the City streets and sidewalks in and around the mouth of the Buffalo River. The impetus behind this trail is the display and interpretation of the many existing grain elevators on Kelly Island and along South Park Avenue, Ohio Street, Smith Street and St. Clair Street. The proposed plan was developed in 1996 by the Industrial Heritage Committee, Inc., who are continually

looking for potential funding sources. A small section is being funded and constructed as part of the Inner Harbor Project.

The key linkages along this segment includes:

- THE BUFFALO INNER HARBOR
- DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL AREAS
- THE BUFFALO RIVER GREENWAY

H. BUFFALO RIVER GREENWAY: PROPOSED / NOT FUNDED

The City of Buffalo (via the Buffalo Greenways Implementation Plan) and the Friends of the Buffalo Niagara Rivers (via the Buffalo River Greenway Plan) have completed the needed planning efforts. The trail meanders along both sides of the River, along the banks, adjacent streets and neighborhoods and through the local parks. Cazenovia Creek is also included in this greenway trail making this segment a true greenway network. The intent is that as new development occurs in the area, the trail be included and be built in phases. Simultaneous to these efforts, the Friends are continually looking for funding sources.

The key linkages of this segment include:

- CONWAY PARK
- SMITH STREET PARK
- BAILEY AVENUE PARK
- SENECA BLUFFS PARK
- MONGOVAN PARK
- STACHOWSKI/HOUGHTON PARK
- CAZENOVIA PARK
- HILLERY AND BUTLER PARKS

I. TOWN OF EVANS BIKE PATH: PLANNED/ NOT FUNDED

This 1.3 mile stretch of pathway is planned to connect the proposed bike path along Old Lake Shore Road to the Village of Angola. The off-road pathway would run along the north side of Lake Avenue. Once completed it will be owned and maintained by the Town of Evans.

2.3 CONCLUSION

In all, the RWTS is comprised of 88 miles of trails, of which 36 miles are existing (41%) and 52 miles have yet to be built. Through review of the existing and proposed trail segments that comprise the Regional Waterfront Trail System, the following conclusions and recommendations are made to advance Erie County's planning of the waterfront as a regional asset:

- *It is clear there is a strong desire by most waterfront municipalities to improve their existing, or plan, design and build new linkages to create a continuous waterfront trail system. An organized process and program needs to be developed and followed for optimum coordination between these municipalities and the County to facilitate completion of the trail.*
- *One such avenue is coordination with the GBNRTC Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee and the NYSDOT in development of the Shoreline Trail, which extends from Fort Niagara in Niagara County on Lake Ontario, south to Evangola State Park. There is overlap between Erie County's Regional Waterfront Trail System, the Shoreline Trail and NY State's Seaway Trail. Not to be overlooked, and equally important is the necessary coordination with the Buffalo Greenway Implementation Plan.*
- *As part of the coordination efforts, the various unbuilt segments of the Waterfront Trail need to be evaluated in a forum that will help set the regional priorities. This*

“Strong consideration should be given to making the system a NY State owned and operated facility.”

will serve to focus energy and resources on targeting specific segments for funding sources.

- *The two segments with no proposals advanced (#13 in the Town of Hamburg and #17 in the Town of Brant) should move into a planning cycle to prompt dialogue at a regional level on how and when it is best to complete the missing segments.*
- *In order to efficiently advance a completed Waterfront Trail System, a plan should be developed to educate the public about trail systems, with emphasis on the improved quality of life issues and answers to the most common concerns raised by the public. An education program geared for disseminating factual information would off-set the misinformation being commonly held, particularly regarding safety, security and property value concerns.*
- *To prepare for a public awareness process, case study research and documentation should be performed. This effort would promote factual and understandable information to the public in a consistent manner throughout the County, regardless of what municipality a trail is proposed in. Issues that need to be addressed include, but are not limited to: maintenance responsibilities/ procedures, liability concerns, property value impacts, safety/ security issues, etc.*
- *In order to promote trail system expansion to the public, consistent supervision and proper maintenance of the existing waterfront trails is if utmost importance. For example, there is a marked difference between the Ellicott Creek Trail and the Scajaquada Pathway and how each is managed. Inter-municipal agreements and procedures need to be developed and followed in order to have a consistent Regional Waterfront Trail System.*
- *Along a similar vein, it is recommended that design standards be developed and incorporated into the Trail System. A design vocabulary of consistent or at least compatible site furnishings, signage, historic markers, pavement markings, interpretation, trailheads, etc.*

should be established sooner rather than later to allow the next segments to set the stage with the agreed upon standards.

- *Where possible, through the greenspaces adjacent to the system, develop secondary connector trails to the primary Waterfront Trail. For example, new trails in Evangola State Park would connect the beach to the Waterfront Trail.*
- *Finally, once the Regional Waterfront Trail System is completed, strong consideration should be given to making the system a NY State owned and operated facility. Erie County's trail success could be coupled with a Niagara County trail system to combine for a true regional waterfront asset. Imagine a continuous State Park Trail System beginning at Fort Niagara to the north and connected some 80 miles later to Evangola State Park to the south. State highlights along the way would include the Niagara Reservation, Beaver Island State Park, the proposed Buffalo Outer Harbor State Park and Woodlawn Beach State Park. Our beautiful State shoreline could then easily compliment that of our neighbors across the water in Ontario, Canada.*